

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, released the following statement today after President Obama announced he will be sending reinforcements to Afghanistan:

"After months of deliberation, the president has decided to endorse the request for reinforcements by our commanding officer in Afghanistan and I support his decision.

"By calling for a surge of forces in Afghanistan, President Obama is embracing the counter-insurgency strategy that succeeded in Iraq, and if given the chance can succeed again.

"As commander in chief, the president has an obligation to ensure that our soldiers have the resources they need to get the job done and to ensure that the American people understand the importance of the mission.

"The war in Afghanistan is a war of necessity and a decisive victory over the Taliban and Al Qaeda must remain our unchanging objective. The goal of American forces in Afghanistan must be nothing less than a decisive victory for freedom.

"I look forward to hearing from Secretary of Defense Gates and General Stanley McChrystal in the coming days as to how they plan to deploy the additional resources in a manner that will yield a decisive victory.

"While reinforcements are critical to achieving victory, the morale of our troops and the unequivocal support of those at home is equally important.

"Our brave men and women in uniform need to know that those who send them into battle will stand by them until the battle is won. Congress should resist the temptation to impose artificial timelines for withdrawal or benchmarks as they only demoralize our troops and embolden our enemies. Telling the enemy when your commitment to fight will run out is a prescription for defeat.

"Congress should also reject any effort to pass a tax increase on the backs of our soldiers. Levying a war 'surtax' at a time of runaway federal spending is an insult to our troops and would only divide the country when public support for the war is more important than ever.

"The American people continue to offer their loved ones and their resources in support of freedom in Afghanistan. It is deeply offensive to suggest that they should sacrifice even more because Washington refuses to practice fiscal discipline. Congress should demonstrate its own ability to make the tough choices on spending instead of using the war in Afghanistan as an excuse to further burden American taxpayers."